

THE PURSUIT of God, Pt. 1

DEUT. 6.4-9

This message begins a series entitled “Rooted.” We will begin this study with the most likely subject – the Pursuit of God, or our search for truth concerning the person and nature of God.

Will Durant, a well-known historian and philosopher, said that the greatest question of our time is, “Can man live without God?”

Ravi Zacharias wrote a book that bears that question as its title in which he sought to answer two questions:

1. Does God **e**_____?
2. If God exists, what is His **c**_____ or nature?

One thing we as Christians need to realize is that all that other religions believe is not wrong. All religions contain some element of truth. Most contain excellent teachings and call for a high moral character among their adherents.

However, all religions cannot be **c**_____ on all subjects, and when we discover a subject or belief on which other religions and Christianity disagree, we need to stand firmly on the point that only Christianity is true.

There can only be one correct answer to the questions of righteousness. And there can only be one answer to the question concerning the existence of God. Either He exists or He does not.

The beliefs concerning the existence of God form the first great division among men concerning religion. When the existence of God is considered, there are three major belief systems:

1. A_____

Atheism is the deliberate, definite, dogmatic denial of the existence of God. It is not satisfied with appropriate truth or relative truth, but claims to see the ins and outs of the game quite clearly being the absolute denial of the absolute. (Etienne Borne)

Atheism may be...

- **p**_____ (characterized by an apathy towards God as with the lady seeking benevolence)
- **d**_____ (one who openly declares that they do not believe in any form of god).

2. A_____

Believes that there is not enough empirical (scientific) evidence to make a determination if God exists or not.

The word “agnostic” means “without **k**_____.”

Furthermore, since all truth is relative, then all knowledge is also relative and therefore uncertain. In other words, God is not only unknown, but unknowable.

3. T_____

This group includes everyone else – in other words, those who acknowledge the presence of a Supreme Being of some sort.

This category can be further subdivided into several groups:

- **Dualism**

There are two equal forces in the Universe – Good and **E**_____ – vying for control. Only one will eventually win, but the outcome is anything but certain.

- **Pantheism**

Typically ignores the transcendence of God and denies the personality of God. God is immanent in the Universe. In other words, God **is** the material universe; the **U**_____ is God.

“God is all; all is God.”

- **Deism**

Puts the emphasis on God’s transcendence to the neglect of His immanence. In other words, “God is present in creation only by his power, not in his very nature and being.”

- **Polytheism**

The belief in **m**_____ gods, typically resulting in idolatry.

- **Henotheism**

Henotheism is very similar to polytheism in that the adherent believes there are many gods in the universe, but they have singled out one of those gods as the focus of their worship.

M_____ is henotheistic. They worship only one god – the god of this world. However, they also believe that the god of this world was once a man who earned the right to be a god and that every man has the potential to become a god.

Since there are an unknown or infinite number of planets in the Universe, then there is an unknown or an infinite number of gods.

- **M**_____

Monotheism is the belief that there is only **o**_____ God.

There are three major belief systems in the world that are monotheistic: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

According to J. B. Phillips (*Your God Is Too Small*), many people in the world see God as a “hot house god who could only exist between the pages of the Bible or inside the four walls of a Church.”

In other words, we have made God our own and have defined Him in terms with which we are comfortable.

As a result, the world sees our God as one who only exists in **m**_____ and in the apparently secret society of the **c**_____ fellowship.

J. B. Phillips

Many men and women today are living, often with inner dissatisfaction, without any faith in God at all. This is not because they are particularly wicked or selfish or, as the old-fashioned would say, “godless,” but because they have not found with their adult minds a God big enough to “account for” life, big enough to “fit in with” the new scientific age, big enough to command their highest admiration and respect, and consequently their willing co-operation.

Conceptions of what God is really like:

- **C**_____
- **F**_____ image
- “Old man in the sky”

These and many other concepts of God have crept in unawares into our homes and even our churches. We do not have a clear concept of biblical doctrines because we do not have a clear concept of the God who created us.

If we get it wrong about **G**_____, then we will get it wrong about everything else. That is why we will begin our “Rooted” study learning what the Bible has to say about God.

We will do this with lots of scriptures and with limited commentary. I encourage you today to begin praying that God will move in our church and even in our community as we endeavor to understand Him and His ways and purposes.

Resources

Richard L. Strauss, *The Joy of Knowing God*, Copyright © 1997 by Biblical Studies Press, L.L.C. and the authors, <http://bible.org/seriespage/god-spirit>.

R.A. Torrey. *What the Bible Teaches*. Copyright 1898-1933, Fleming H. Revell Company.

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Henry Clarence Thiessen. *Lectures in Systematic Theology*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company:Grand Rapids, MI. 2003.

John C. Rankin, “Male and Female as the Image of God: The Grand Design,”
<http://www.teinet.net/granddesign.html>

Andrew S. Kulikovsky, “The Nature of God,”
<http://hermeneutics.kulikovskyonline.net/hermeneutics/god.pdf>